



FH  
[REDACTED]

**STATE OF WISCONSIN**  
**Division of Hearings and Appeals**

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In the Matter of

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

DECISION

CCO/168249

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**PRELIMINARY RECITALS**

Pursuant to a petition filed August 26, 2015, under Wis. Admin. Code § HA 3.03, to review a decision by the Milwaukee Early Care Administration - MECA in regard to Child Care benefits (CCB), a telephonic hearing was held on September 22, 2015.

The issue for determination is whether the petitioner must repay an overpayment of CCB that occurred because of the agency's error.

There appeared at that time and place the following persons:

**PARTIES IN INTEREST:**

Petitioner:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Respondent:

Department of Children and Families  
201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

By: Sheila Easley, CC Subsidy Specialist Sr.  
Milwaukee Early Care Administration - MECA  
Department of Children And Families  
1220 W. Vliet St. 2nd Floor, 200 East  
Milwaukee, WI 53205

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:**

Kelly Cochrane  
Division of Hearings and Appeals

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Petitioner (CARES # [REDACTED]) is a resident of Milwaukee County.
2. Petitioner received CCB from at least March 1, 2015-June 30, 2015.

3. On August 12 and 13, 2015 the agency issued a notice of decision to petitioner stating that she was overpaid CCB from March 1, 2015-June 30, 2015 in the amount of \$3009.01 due to agency error.

### **DISCUSSION**

Child Care Benefits are provided to working low-income families; working foster parents, kinship care relatives providing care under a court order and receiving kinship care benefits, and subsidized guardians/interim caretakers; and for individuals who are preparing for employment through Wisconsin Works, Food Share Employment and Training Program (FSET), tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or in high school and working on their high school diploma.

In this case, the agency admits it authorized petitioner's CCB by failing to budget all of her earned income correctly. The petitioner does not challenge the agency's calculations but contends that she should not have to repay the overpayment because it was not her fault and she reported all of her income. While I understand her argument, I am bound by child care rules. The statute requires the department to recover all child care overpayments regardless of who is at fault. Wis. Stat. §49.195(3). The Wisconsin Administrative Code, §DCF 101.23(1)(g), explains this in the following way:

"Overpayment" or "debt" means any benefit or payment received under s. 49.148, 49.155, 49.157, or 49.19, Stats., in an amount greater than the amount that the individual, AFDC assistance group, or W-2 group was eligible to receive under applicable statutes and rules, regardless of the reason for the overpayment. An overpayment may be the result of client error, administrative error, or intentional program violation.

This means that the petitioner is responsible for the overpayment, even if she did not do anything outright to cause it. Accordingly, I must uphold the agency's decision.

I add, assuming petitioner finds this decision unfair, that it is the long-standing position of the Division of Hearings & Appeals that the Division's hearing examiners lack the authority to render a decision on equitable arguments. See, Wisconsin Socialist Workers 1976 Campaign Committee v. McCann, 433 F.Supp. 540, 545 (E.D. Wis.1977). This office must limit its review to the law as set forth in statutes, federal regulations, and administrative code provisions.

The petitioner may wish to contact the Public Assistance Collection Unit (PACU), which is responsible for collecting overpayments of public assistance benefits, to see if she can set up a reasonable repayment plan and avoid tax intercept. The PACU can be reached at P.O. Box 8938, Madison, WI 53708-8938 by mail, Phone 1-[REDACTED], Fax: (608) 266-8302, email: [dwspace@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:dwspace@dwd.state.wi.us), and online at <http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/pacu/>.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The agency correctly seeks to recover an overpayment of CCB caused by agency error.

**THEREFORE, it is**

**ORDERED**

The petitioner's appeal is dismissed.

## REQUEST FOR A REHEARING

You may request a rehearing if you think this decision is based on a serious mistake in the facts or the law or if you have found new evidence that would change the decision. Your request must be **received within 20 days after the date of this decision**. Late requests cannot be granted.

Send your request for rehearing in writing to the Division of Hearings and Appeals, 5005 University Avenue, Suite 201, Madison, WI 53705-5400 **and** to those identified in this decision as "PARTIES IN INTEREST." Your rehearing request must explain what mistake the Administrative Law Judge made and why it is important or you must describe your new evidence and explain why you did not have it at your first hearing. If your request does not explain these things, it will be denied.

The process for requesting a rehearing may be found at Wis. Stat. § 227.49. A copy of the statutes may be found online or at your local library or courthouse.

## APPEAL TO COURT

You may also appeal this decision to Circuit Court in the county where you live. Appeals must be filed with the Court **and** served either personally or by certified mail on the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, 201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200, Madison, Wisconsin 53703, **and** on those identified in this decision as "PARTIES IN INTEREST" **no more than 30 days after the date of this decision** or 30 days after a denial of a timely rehearing (if you request one).

The process for Circuit Court Appeals may be found at Wis. Stat. §§ 227.52 and 227.53. A copy of the statutes may be found online or at your local library or courthouse.

Given under my hand at the City of Milwaukee,  
Wisconsin, this 23rd day of November, 2015

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\sKelly Cochran  
Administrative Law Judge  
Division of Hearings and Appeals



**State of Wisconsin\DIVISION OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS**

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The preceding decision was sent to the following parties on November 23, 2015.

Milwaukee Early Care Administration - MECA  
Public Assistance Collection Unit  
Child Care Fraud